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# **N E W S   R E L E A S E**

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## **Humanities Council receives award for Prime Time**

The Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC), the council's Director of Literary Programs Erika Hamilton and former NHC Executive Director Jane Renner Hood were honored April 2 in Louisiana with a Public Humanities Programming Award for hosting the second highest number of Prime Time Family Reading Time affiliate sites in any state.

Prime Time is a nationally recognized family literacy program designed to help strengthen participants' interest and skills in reading and talking about books. The six-week series is offered free to families whose children, ages 6 to 10 years, struggle with reading.

A 10-year impact study of Prime Time Family Reading Time found that students who participated in Prime Time during their early elementary years outperformed their peers on grade level content in standardized exams. Prime Time students scored higher in language arts and reading, mathematics, science, life science and other subjects.

The program was developed by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH) in 1991. In the last 20 years, more than 1,000 Prime Time programs have been completed in 38 states, reaching 40,000 economically and educationally disadvantaged children and families.

"This kind of impact could not be possible without key partners in and outside of Louisiana who have joined our family, the Prime Time family, to reverse the tide of illiteracy and bring quality humanities education to all," said Miranda Restovic, Prime Time director for the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities.

In Nebraska, more than 65 bilingual and English-only Prime Time series have been held in 15 public libraries, five elementary schools and two community centers since 2002, including programs in Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, Norfolk and Scottsbluff. An additional 13 series are planned for 2011. Erika Hamilton has coordinated Prime Time in Nebraska since 2005.

Dianne Brady, senior consultant and former director for Prime Time in Louisiana, was one of several who nominated the Nebraska Humanities Council for the award. In her nomination letter, Brady wrote, "They understand the value of humanities programming and libraries and have the vision to bring them together for the mutual benefit of both."

Except for the first series, which was funded by LEH, all subsequent Prime Time programs in Nebraska have been funded locally through generous donations from foundations, businesses and individuals throughout the state, and through funds appropriated by the Nebraska Legislature to help expand the program statewide.

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities' Public Humanities Programming Award honors organizations that "have made outstanding contributions to the study and understanding of the humanities" through public programs. Hamilton accepted the award on behalf of the Nebraska Humanities Council at the 2011 Humanities Awards Ceremony April 2 in Darrow, La.

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